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Oregon Agricultural College
Experiment Station

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Destroy the Earwigs

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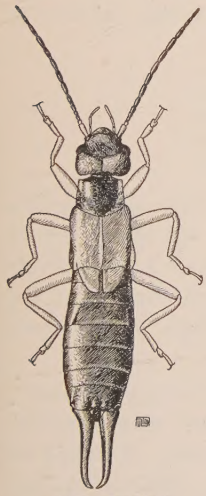
The European earwig has been recently introduced into Oregon. This serious pest devours the vegetables, fruits, and flowers of the garden.

It invades residences, and its presence in the house is offensive.

Because of its filthy habits it is decidedly unsanitary.

It is a potential menace to the great fruit industry of Oregon.

Wherever it has become abundant property values have depreciated.



THE ADULT EARWIG
Enlarged 3 times.

Earwigs Can Be Controlled. At a cost of a few dollars and a little work during a few evenings of the year this pest can be so reduced in numbers that it is no longer a nuisance. For the control a poison-bran mixture is used.

Formula for poison bran—

Sodium fluoride	12 ounces
Molasses	2 quarts
Wheat bran	12 pounds
Water	6 quarts

Dissolve the sodium fluoride in the water, stir in the molasses, add this mixture to the bran and mix thoroughly. If this is not enough liquid to wet all of the bran a little more water can be added, but do not have it wet enough to drip without being pressed.

Directions for Using Poison Bran. The poison bran should be scattered about the ground in the evening just before dark. The latter part of May or early June is the best time for spreading the poison, but some good will result even if used late in the summer.

Scatter the bran thinly over all grass plots. By throwing it hard with a wide swing of the arm it can be scattered more evenly and quickly

than by simply dropping it from the fingers. More material should be applied around the walls of the house and other buildings, along the edge of walks, walls, fences, and curbing, and around trees, bushes and other objects which are apt to afford a hiding place for the earwigs.

Do not sprinkle the lawn for two or three days after spreading the bran, for this washes out the poison.

The amount of materials given in the formula is enough for an ordinary city lot, and one treatment properly applied should kill the majority of earwigs within a few days.

Earwigs crawl about at night and if neighboring property is not treated you can expect them back again before the summer is over. If cooperation is possible it would be desirable to have everyone in the same block scatter poison on the same evening. If a vacant lot adjoins your property, you will be doing yourself a service to poison the earwigs on it if you can not get the owner to do so. Do not forget the parkings and alleys.

Late Summer Poisoning. It is well to follow up the general application of poison-bran bait by the use of small amounts of poison bait applied to trees, walls, and other objects several times during the summer, to catch the earwigs after they begin to climb at night.

For this purpose it is well to have a mixture which will not dry for several days. This may be accomplished by substituting glycerin for a third of the amount of liquid used. Oat hulls will make a mixture which will stick to objects better than wheat bran. The following mixture is suggested:

Sodium fluoride	1 ounce
Molasses	5 ounces (1/3 pint)
Glycerin	5 ounces
Water	5 ounces
Oat hulls, about	1 pound

Mix by dissolving sodium fluoride in the water first, add molasses and glycerin, and mix with enough oat hulls to make a wet mash. Smear pinches of this in the crotches of all trees; leave pellets of it at intervals of about six feet along all fences and walls, and along the top of the house foundation, in cracks of barns and other buildings, or anywhere that the earwigs are seen crawling.

Caution. Sodium fluoride is poisonous to human beings, but death from its use is rare. Wherever small children are present care should be used to prevent them from eating any of the poison bran. It should be scattered so that no large lumps remain on the ground. Material applied to trees and other objects should be placed beyond children's reach. The same precaution should be used in regard to poultry. A thorough sprinkling of the grounds with water after the bran has been on a couple of nights will wash out the poison.

Clean up. The work of controlling the earwig can be aided very materially by doing away with all trash piles and by eliminating as far as possible their hiding places. Vacant lots in earwig territory should not be allowed to grow up in weeds.

Organized Community Effort is the Most Efficient Method. A well planned, thoroughly organized city-wide campaign of control is the really effective method for handling the earwig situation.

Distribution of the Earwig. The Oregon Agricultural Experiment Station desires to keep informed on the distribution and spread of the earwig and would be glad to have information on this point. You can do a service by sending in one or two dead specimens, stating whether they are very numerous, and giving the name of the nearest street corner. Be sure the insects are dead. We need the specimens in order to be sure it is the European earwig and not some native species.